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Some text and illustrations are lost through tight binding. This is a problem which we regret we have found unavoidable since we are only filming at the Victoria and Albert Museum those catalogues that cannot be found in other London locations.

78.N

24. IX. 1902

ERNST LUDWIG
KIRCHNER

April 16 – May 10, 1952

CURT VALENTIN GALLERY
FORMERLY BUCHHOLZ GALLERY
32 EAST 57 STREET · NEW YORK

ERNST LUDWIG KIRCHNER

Born May 6, 1880, in Aschaffenburg, Germany.

1901 to 1905 student of architecture in Dresden.

1905 formed together with Erich Heckel and Karl Schmidt-Rottluff the art group called "Die Bruecke" (The Bridge).

1911 moved to Berlin.

1913 dissolution of "The Bridge."

1914 drafted to military service which resulted in physical breakdown.

1916 moved to Davos-Frauenkirch, Switzerland.

1922 to 1938, the weaver Lise Gujer works with Kirchner making carpets from his designs.

1923 exhibition in the Basel Kunsthalle.

1924 publication of the book *Umbra Vitae* by Georg Heym with illustrations by Kirchner. With this book Kirchner made one of the most significant contributions to modern German book-illustration.

1937 in Germany 639 of his works are confiscated as "degenerate"; 32 of them are shown in the so-called "Degenerate Art" exhibition in Munich.

1938 Kirchner committed suicide in Switzerland on June 15.

The first one-man show of the paintings of Ernst Ludwig Kirchner in America was exhibited at the Buchholz Gallery (Curt Valentin) in September, 1937.

The Museum of Modern Art in New York showed a group of Kirchner paintings in 1931 in their exhibition of Modern German Art and acquired their first painting by the artist in 1939.

The Curt Valentin Gallery wishes to express thanks to the Dudley Peter Allen Memorial Art Museum in Oberlin, Ohio, and to The Museum of Modern Art as lenders to this exhibition and to Dr. Georg Schmidt of the Kunstmuseum, Basle, Switzerland, for his continuous assistance.

The following public institutions in this country own paintings or graphic work by Ernst L. Kirchner:

Busch-Reisinger Museum, Cambridge; Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge; Art Institute of Chicago; Detroit Institute of Arts; University of Nebraska Art Galleries, Lincoln; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Dudley Peter Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin; City Art Museum, St. Louis; National Gallery of Art (Lessing Rosenwald Collection), Washington, D. C.; Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C.

LETTER FROM ERNST L. KIRCHNER

[April 17, 1937]

Dear Mr. Valentin,

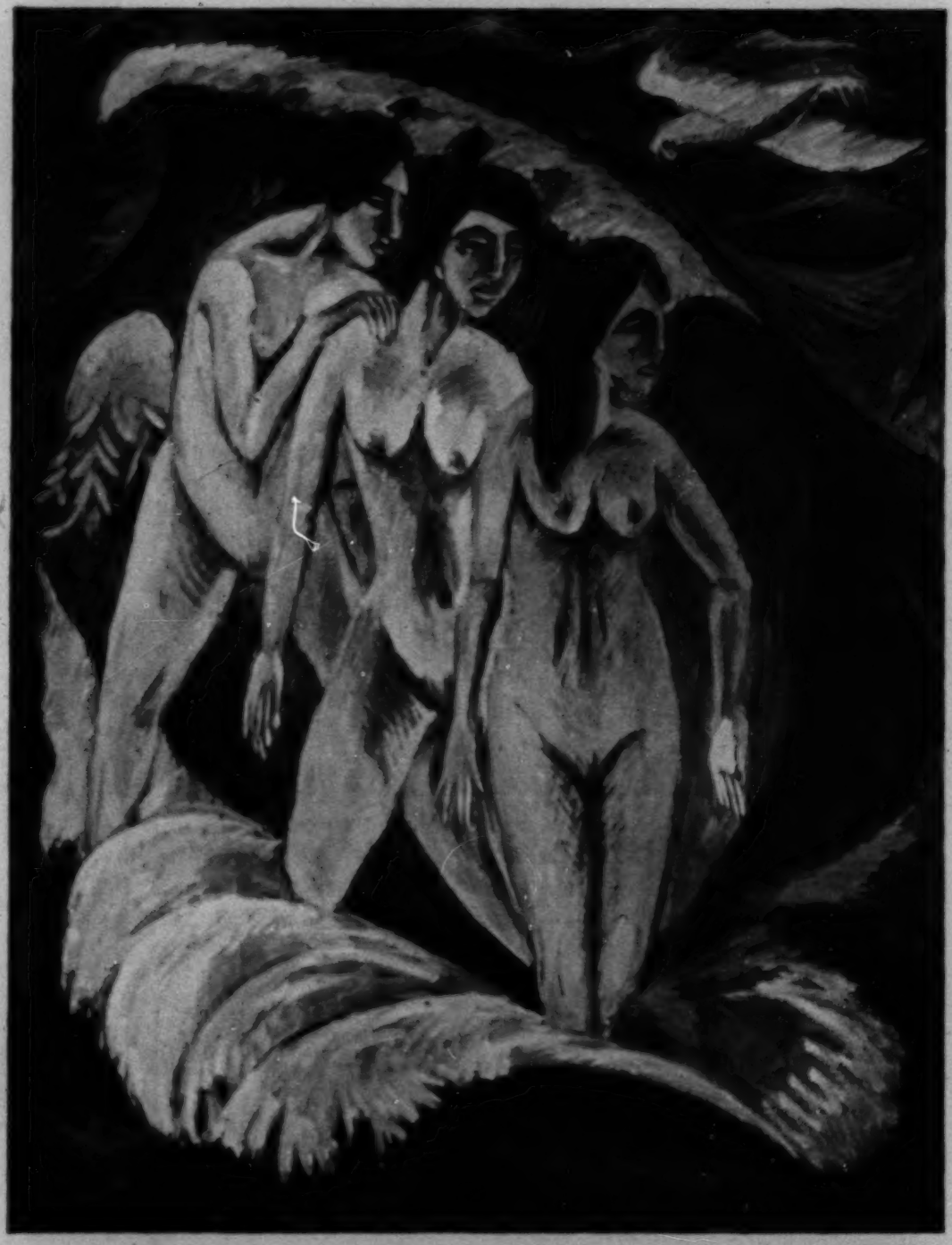
. . . Did you know that as far back as 1900 I had the audacious idea of renewing German Art? Indeed I did, and the impulse came to me while looking at an exhibition of the Munich Secessionists in Munich. Their pictures were dull both in design and execution, the subjects uninteresting, and it was quite obvious that the public was bored. Indoors hung these anaemic, bloodless, lifeless studio daubs and outside life, noisy and colorful, pulsated in the sun. In those days I was a strong and healthy lad, not like I am today when the spirit is still active but the body often fails me.

Why didn't the good Secessionists paint this full-blooded life? The answer is that they could not because they did not see it. It was outside and it changed incessantly, and when they dragged it into their studios it ceased to be life and was merely a pose. I was filled with the desire to try and grasp what they had missed; I did and I am still doing so today.

First of all I had to try and find a method whereby I could seize the effect of motion; here I was helped by the Rembrandt drawings in the Munich Kupferstichkabinett. They taught me how to arrest a movement in a few bold lines. I practised this wherever I went. At home and elsewhere I made larger drawings from memory, catching the pass-

ing moment and finding new forms in the swift ecstasy of this work, which, without being true to nature, expressed everything I wanted to express in a bigger and clearer way.

I learned a great deal from an exhibition of French Neo-impressionists. I found the drawing weak but I studied their color technique, founded on a study of optics, only to arrive at an opposite conclusion; namely not to let complementaries and the complementary colors be formed while one looked at them, according to Goethe's theory. This made the pictures much more colorful. My sense of design was simplified and strengthened by the fact that I had learned to make woodcuts from



my father when I was only 15 years old. So armed I arrived in Dresden and during my studies there I was able to arouse my friends' enthusiasm over my new ideas.

My goal was always to express emotion and experience with large and simple forms and clear colors, and it is still my goal today. But whereas I used to paint a great deal from life, today I paint only from my imagination or memory. I wanted to express the richness and joy of living, to paint humanity at work and at play in its reactions and interreactions and to express love as well as hatred.

Sometimes a symbolic truth rose from an individual picture like a law of nature. That great poet, Walt Whitman, was responsible for my outlook on life. During my dismal days of want and hunger in Dresden, his *Leaves of Grass* was and still is my comfort and encouragement. . . . He

possesses the true spirit of the artist who can give and love without desiring. We have a German who follows in his footsteps, Georg Heym, the poet of *Umbra Vitae*, who has prophetically perceived and written of our last decade.

Want drove me from Dresden to Berlin; during 1910 and 1919 I had a workshop there. But things got better in 1911. B. Graef in Jena did a great deal to make my work known and introduced me to Schames, to whom I owe so much. I cannot work and be my own agent at the same time, it isn't natural. The artist's work demands great mental strain and deep concentration; the business side of it, quite other qualities. So this connection with Schames, coupled with our later personal friendship, was a great piece of luck for me. My intensive production during my last

years in Germany and the first Swiss period was directly owing to the care of my dear old friend Schames.

You know pretty well how my work developed after this, how, after 1925, a new period in which I still am, followed on the old. Vision becomes clearer, and I only regret that illness often forces me to rest when I would like to create. The new discoveries in form, all coming from nature, must be worked out, sometimes they have to be remodelled and clarified again and again in drawings before they assume their rightful places on the canvas.

With age one learns much which the young painter can only instinc-

tively guess at, but I still feel as naked and innocent before a new picture as I did in my youthful days and there is still a mysterious surprise when the Form rises clear and plain from one's myriad efforts and is suddenly apparent. I used to put light and shade together in a picture, expressing them in color. Today I separate them and lay one design over the other, so to speak, and find that I thus achieve doubly strong expression. Of course both forms must spring from the inner picture. Naturalistic design would only have a disturbing effect, but at the same time I experience again and again while working that the exact reproduction of the design in my mind tallies with the actual form, and how very accurately I unconsciously paint even the smallest detail in the flat.

With best regards,

Yours,

E. L. Kirchner

(translated from German)

[46]

[40]

CATALOGUE

OILS

1 WOMAN WITH RED FLOWERS
1903. 59 x 28½"

2 THE STREET
1907. 59 x 79"
Lent by The Museum of Modern Art

3 SEATED GIRL (FRANZI)
1907. 32 x 36"

4 FLOWER BEDS IN THE LARGE GARDENS IN DRESDEN
1907. 30½ x 37¼"

5 PORTRAIT OF GUTHMANN
1909. 31¾ x 25½"

6 BATHERS AND TREES
1913. 59¼ x 47¼"

7 BATHERS
1913. 79 x 59"

8 SELF PORTRAIT AS A SOLDIER
1915. 27¼ x 24"
Lent by Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin

9 PINK ROSES
1918. 31 x 27½"

10 TWO COWBOYS WITH COWS
1919. 39¼ x 47¼"

11 SELF PORTRAIT
1920. 34 x 22"

12 PORTRAIT OF REDSLOB
1923. 47¼ x 29½"

13 QUARRY AT WILDBODEN
1923. 47½ x 35½"

14 MODERN BOHEMIA
1924. 50 x 66"

15 CAFÉ IN DAVOS
1926. 28½ x 36"

16 STREET SCENE
1926. 47½ x 39¼"

17 THREE NUDES IN A FOREST
1928. 16½ x 23¼"

18 NUDES IN FOREST
1928. 59 x 77"

19 LUETZOWUFER IN THE MORNING
1929. 28½ x 36"

20 THE ORGANIST OF SPINA
1930. 47¼ x 35¼"

21 BERN
1930 (?). 27½ x 31½"

22 SLOPE WITH YELLOW TREES
1930 (?). 25½ x 21½"

23 LANDSCAPE
1935 (?). 35⅛ x 47"

24 HOMMAGE À KLEE
1936. 21⅜ x 25⅜"

25 HERD OF SHEEP
1938. 39¼ x 47¼"

WATERCOLORS

26 FRAUENKIRCH IN WINTER
13⅛ x 19¼"

27 BRANDENBURG GATE, BERLIN
13¾ x 18⅛"

28 LANDSCAPE WITH MIST
14 x 19¾"

29 MILK TRUCK IN MORNING MIST
15 x 19⅛"

30 BOYS IN ALPS
14¼ x 19"

31 **PARADE**
20 x 14"

32 **MOUNTAIN FOREST**
19⅛ x 14¼"

33 **FARMERS IN STABLE**
15 x 18½"

34 **GIRL IN THE WOODS**
19⅝ x 15⅜"

35 **FOREST MEADOW**
14½ x 19½"

SCULPTURE

36 **EVA**
1919. Wood.
H. 38"

WOODCUTS

37 **RIDER**
33¼ x 21½"

38 **STILL LIFE**
15¾ x 10¼"

[32]

[31]

39 THE COMPOSER
(OTTO KLEMPERER)
21⅛ x 16¾"

40 ANNETTE KOLB
16¾ x 11"

41 WOMAN AND CHILD
19¾ x 15¾"

42 PORTRAIT OF DR. G.
13⅛ x 11⅛"

43 ROAD AND STREAM
15 x 26"

44 THREE DANCERS
19¾ x 14"

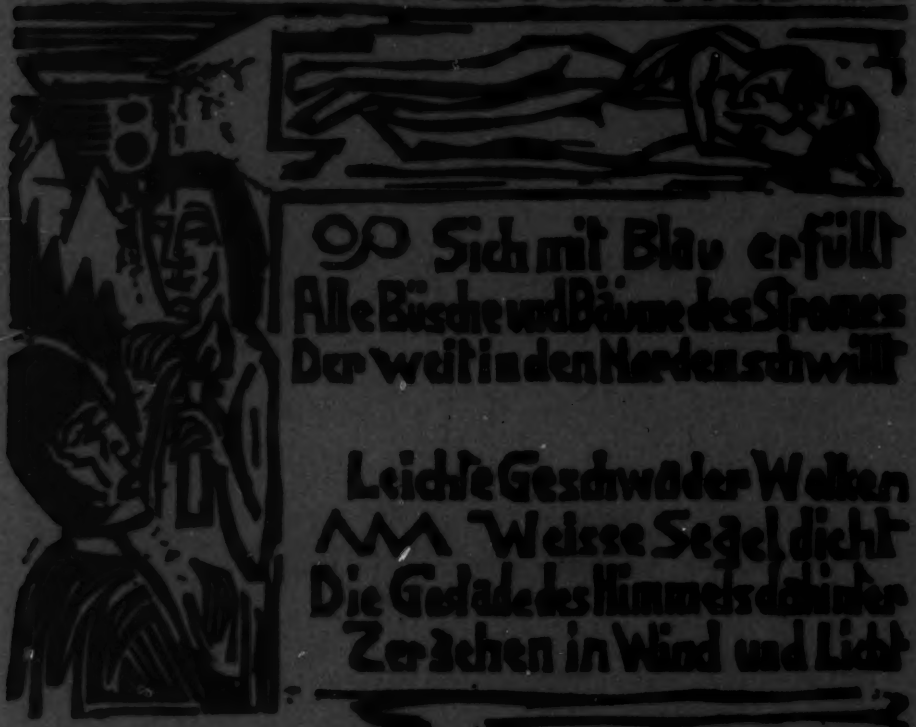
45 JEAN ARP
14 x 12½"

46 OSKAR SCHLEMMER
19½ x 14½"

47 DANCING COUPLE
33¼ x 21½"

from Georg Heym "Umbra Vitae" →
Kurt Wolff, Publisher (Munich 1924)

Alle Landschaften haben



Sich mit Blau erfüllt
Alle Büsche und Bäume des Stromes
Der weit in den Norden schwillt

Leichte Geschwader Wolken
Weisse Segel dicht
Die Gestade des Himmels dahinter
Zerfahren in Wind und Licht

Wenn die Abende sinken
Und wir schlafen ein,
Gehen die Träume die schönen
Mit leichten Füssen herein

Cymbeln lassen sie klingen
In den Händen licht
Manche flüstern und halten
Kerzen vor ihr Gesicht

E.W. Kirchner

CURT VALENTIN GALLERY

[Cover: Catalogue No. 47]